

Week 1

JAMAICA BAPTIST UNION MISSION AGENCY

MISSION MONTH BIBLE STUDY OUTLINES

Theme: Partnering with God; Fulfilling God's Mission

Week 1

Topic: Empowered for God's Mission

Texts: Acts 1:6-8

Objective: To help members to gain an appreciation of their need of the Spirit's enabling power for mission

Setting the Stage Have you ever received an assignment for which you felt woefully inadequate or unprepared? Please share.

BIBLICAL BLURB

Jesus had spent about over three years with His disciples, sharing His mission and purpose with them (cf. Luke 4:19). During the latter part of his earthly ministry, he told them that after his departure, he would send "another" to be with them (John 14:16-18; 26). The Holy Spirit would come as their Comforter, Guide and Teacher (John 16:13-15).

Subsequent to his resurrection, he appeared to his disciples and continued teaching them. On one occasion, the disciples asked Him about his agenda regarding the restoration of the kingdom to Israel. In His response, Jesus redirected their missional focus and reminded them of the coming of the Holy Spirit.

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:8 NIV).

The disciples were being invited to conceive of a mission that would require more than their experience, skill and knowledge. They would not be able to influence people on their own and it was for that reason Jesus had earlier told them to wait until they had received the required power before they embarked on the mission.

The question that many may want an answer to is, what is the power that they would be receiving?

TEACHING POINTS

1. The Promised Power – “You Will Receive Power.”

The Greek word *dunamis* (**δύναμις**), - from which we get the English words dynamite, dynamo and dynamic - means power, strength, might or ability.

The disciples would need the help from God to present the gospel with great effect. They were going to face those who opposed the message about Christ. They would be criticized and persecuted for their faith. They were going to face new challenges which would involve performing miracles and confronting the demon-possessed.

In light of this then, they would need the enabling power of God to speak the word of God with boldness. The power of God would enable them to perform signs and miracles as a testimony to the authority of God's saving grace. Therefore, the disciples did not need to be afraid or timid because they would not be left on their own.

When God calls us for ministry He equips us. He supplies the gifts that are needed for the work of ministry and He equips those whom He has chosen.

“for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.” (Phil. 2:13 NIV).

Do we tend to focus on our deficiencies or limitations when God calls us to His mission? Do we tend to look for excuses not to serve? Like Moses we need to remember and make much of the sovereignty of God when He calls us to mission.

“¹¹The LORD said to him, “Who gave human beings their mouths? Who makes them deaf or mute? Who gives them sight or makes them blind? Is it not I, the LORD? ¹²Now go; I will help you speak and will teach you what to say.” (Exodus 4:11-12 NIV)

2. The Purpose of The Power - To Be Witnesses

To be a witness (Greek - *martur*) is to affirm that one has seen or heard or experienced something. In some cases, the witness (*martyr*) may suffer persecution and death for advocating, renouncing, refusing to renounce, or refusing to advocate a belief or cause as demanded by an opposing or hostile party.

Jesus had already taught the disciples about the cost involved in being his followers and witnesses. They were told that they would be hated and

persecuted by the world (John 15:18-20). However, they were also counselled not to fear because the promised Holy Spirit would be with them.

The gifts and power with which we have been blessed is not to be used for self-promotion. We are to remember that it is through the grace of God we have been chosen to participate in His ministry *“for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up”* (Eph.4:12).

We must be careful that we do not allow pride to set in, when we are being used by Him. We must always submit to the will of God, remembering it is an honour to be chosen by Him. As such we must be honourable witnesses, not false witnesses.

3. The Place To Be Witnesses – Everywhere

When the disciples asked Jesus about the restoration of the kingdom to Israel (v.6), their agenda was different from His. They were thinking of an earthly political kingdom consisting only of Jews. Jesus' response spoke to a mission with a global reach *“in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”* This kingdom would include people from all nations; no one was to be excluded, for God is God of the entire world.

The entire book of Acts documents for us the fact of how the Apostles and the early Christian church fulfilled the mission in the power of the Spirit, by taking the gospel to the ends of the earth, just as they were told.

Acts 2 testifies to the initial work of the Holy Spirit in Jerusalem that occurred on the day of Pentecost. Most of the apostles remained there for some time. However, after persecution broke out in Jerusalem, many of the apostles headed to **Samaria**, where many persons responded positively to the preaching of Phillip. Soon after that, we read of Saul's conversion and his missional exploits which took place even as Peter was summoned to cross cultural barriers and minister to the Gentiles. St. Paul's missionary journeys took him to several places which could be understood as going to **the utmost parts of the earth**.

Summary

As they were empowered for God's mission, the apostles became faithful witnesses, not just at home, but beyond. They went beyond cultural, political and religious boundaries with the Good News about Christ. It was then that they understood that God's kingdom was not merely local but global.

We are now called upon to partner with God in this mission, by being God's witnesses wherever, whenever and to whoever we are sent. We have the enabling power and presence of the Holy Spirit with us and therefore can be bold and confident witnesses.

Discussion Questions

- ✓ Why do you think many Christians will enthusiastically share their testimony in a worship service but afraid to do so at a street meeting?
- ✓ Where are some of the places you believe God has placed you as His witness but you would rather not be there?